9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



159 Toma the headman, sometimes known as Male Toma, an
[55] honorary name, sometimes known as Toma the Short, so-called because of his stocky build, was a famous person, and once had been a serf. He was born of serf parents at Gam, and as a boy had worked for the Chuanas, drawing their water and herding their cattle and goats.

672 When Toma was a boy, his father was murdered by a
682 child, the result of a terrible accident which took place one
159 day when Toma's father was arguing with the father of a boy named Gao. Gao, who couldn't have been more than ten years old, became upset and angry when he heard his father quarreling and, taking his father's weapons, shot Toma's father in the chest with a poisoned arrow. The old man was helped to the shade, the arrow was drawn out and the wound sucked, but as there is no antidote for arrow poison the old man lived only for the rest of the day and by night he was dead.

Oddly enough, the crime was connected with the old man and not with Gao, the young murderer, for ever after that day the old man was referred to as Tsamko Bone Arrow,
[55] while Gao in later years became known as Gao Wild Pig, after a pig he had killed which was in some way remarkable.

159 Toma flourished as a young man and became an excellent hunter with tireless legs, tireless eyes, and a deadly aim, and it was said of him that he never returned from a hunt without having killed at least a wildebeest, if not something larger. Hence, the people connected with him ate a great deal of meat and his popularity grew. He once said of himself: "From the day I was born I was born for meat."

159 When Toma was in his late teens, some say, his powers
622 in hunting attracted the attention of the headman of Gau-
591 tscha Pan, who offered Toma the hand of his daughter, Tu, in marriage. Toma accepted, went to live with his wife's peo-

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10



among the Namib Bushmen the victim may take back not only the stolen property, but also all the thief's possessions. That blood vengeance is actually exercised in case of theft appears from the following incident recorded by Miss Bleek. An Auen man had a good deal of tobacco, most of which he hid in a tree. Returning later he found the tobacco gone, and human footprints round the tree. He followed the spoor to one of a cluster of huts, where he saw a Bushman sitting at the fire cutting the stolen tobacco. Although he had only a spear with him, he darted up and stabbed the thief to death. The man's wife, intervening, was also stabbed. Then the assailant tried to escape, but was shot in the side by a poisoned arrow from the group round the next fire. He succeeded in reaching his home, but died of the poison a few days later. Similarly, in the waterless regions of the Namib Desert, men on the hunt often store up supplies of water in ostrich egg-shells and also of meat. Another person coming upon this supply may take from it, but must follow the spoor of the owner, tell him about it, and recompense him. If this is not done the owner, when he discovers the loss, will follow the spoor of the thief until he finds him and will then kill him if he can.

Here, according to Trenk, homicide in case of theft and adultery is apparently not regarded as murder, but as punishment, and the relatives of the deceased may not take blood vengeance. But, as shown in the instance quoted from Miss Bleek, among other Bushmen homicide, whether deliberate or accidental, leads inevitably to blood vengeance, the relatives of the dead man combining to kill the murderer. This appears also from another instance recorded by Knudsen.[1] A Bushman, not far from Bethanie in South-West Africa, shot another in the leg with an arrow during a honey beer drinking-bout. The wounded man revenged himself on the spot by shooting his assailant in the heart and killing him. The dead man's brother pursued the killer, who fled, but could not overtake him, and so returned to the camp, where he met the man's wife carrying a child. He tore it from her, threw it up in the air and caught it on the point of his spear. The mother saved herself by fleeing, but two other women

still living, she may be handed over to them and they all have to leave the camp. Should the father be dead and the mother alive, the thief is still taken and given back to the latter, after the stolen property has been recovered. But, if she is an old offender, the mother is said to give her, through a son, to another person, to be burned to death. These facts, obtained from a single young informant, need, however, to be confirmed. The deliberate burning to death of people, for whatever reason, is not reported of any of the other Bushmen.

[1] Quoted in Moritz, "Die älteren Reiseberichte über Deutsch-Südwestafrika," *Mitt. deutz. Schutzgeb.*, xxix (1916), 154.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10



627 related to the homicide were killed by the brother. What happened
● 682 afterwards we are not told, but judging from what is known of blood revenge among the Bushmen it is hardly likely that the matter was allowed to rest there.

Among the Auen, for example, a son is obliged to exact blood
628 vengeance on the slayer of his father, a brother for his brother. If
682 the slayer himself is dead or out of reach, the feud extends to his nearest male relative. A son whose father has been killed is obliged to undertake vengeance as soon as he is grown up. His mother impresses this obligation upon him during his childhood, and as soon as he has caught his first head of big game the obligation must be carried out. He applies to his nearest relatives for help, which is given without question. In the same way whoever has to fear blood vengeance is supported by his relatives and the members of his band. Not only
[562] men but women also may become the objects of the blood feud, although as a rule the latter are taken and held as wives by their captors. So, too, among the Namib Bushmen the slayer is killed by the relatives of the dead man. All the male members of the latter's family combine to revenge his death; an arrow is shot at the slayer, and if this does not immediately kill him he is beaten to death with the kirri. Murderesses are also killed in this manner; but otherwise
[562] women, even for such serious offences as theft and adultery, are only punished by thrashing, although this may sometimes be very severely administered.

We are not told whether the killing of the slayer or his substitute leads to the cessation of the feud, but from an instance quoted by Kaufmann it apparently does not. An old Auen man from Olifantskloof was visiting a brother-in-law at Sidonitsaub. The host put out a snare, in which he caught a giant bustard. This was found by the guest, who took it out of the snare and began to consume it. While he was doing so, the host came up and observing the theft pierced him through the body with a spear. The slayer then fled, but was pursued by the relatives of the dead man and killed. Since then a blood feud has existed between these two bands, connected though they were by marriage.

The only exception to this general rule of self-help is recorded by
[184] Seydel of the Namib Bushmen.[1] He states, it is true, that in case of
622 minor offences self-help is frequently resorted to, but adds that all
692 serious offences are formally adjudicated. The court consists of one

[1] Seydel, op. cit., 503–6.